

HIKING & BACKPACKING



SUMMER IN THE WILDERNESS

Yosemite’s spectacular wilderness is a popular destination in summer. Common sense and an understanding of wilderness travel techniques are required to safely enjoy these wilderness areas. Park regulations are designed for your safety, and to ensure the survival of these wild lands and their communities of life.

In early summer, winter wilderness skills may still be necessary for many extended wilderness trips. Wilderness travelers should check trail conditions before planning a wilderness trip and pack accordingly.

HIGH WATER/STREAM CROSSINGS

Early in the season, water from melting snow and ice may cause high water levels and swift currents. Do not underestimate the power of rushing water—it can be deadly! When crossing an unbridged creek, look for a natural bridge of logs or rocks. Be careful—they can be extremely slippery. If none is available, cross in a wide shallow spot that is not above rapids or falls. Unbuckle your waist strap, use a long stick for stability, and face upstream while crossing. Don’t tie yourself into “safety ropes” — they can drown you. Water will be extremely cold, and extreme caution should be used to prevent conditions which may lead to hypothermia.

PLAN CAREFULLY

- Use topographic maps and guidebooks to plan your trip. Carry a “topo” map and compass when on the trail and know how to use them.
- Allow plenty of time for rest, food storage, and campsite selection. You must be

4 miles from any populated area and 1 mile from any road before camping.

- Check current weather conditions and forecasts prior to your trip. Be prepared for sudden changes in weather; plan for wind, cold, rain, snow, sun, or an emergency bivouac.
- Maximum group size is 15 people for trail travel and 8 people for off-trail travel.
- Proper equipment is vital. Carry sufficient food and water.
- Plan to pack out all trash.
- Yosemite’s wilderness is a wildlife preserve—pets and weapons are prohibited. Bicycles and strollers are not allowed on any trail.

Trail maps, hiking guides, and other literature may be obtained at visitor/wilderness centers or ordered from the Yosemite Bookstore, P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318, 209/379-2648 or fax 209/379-2486.

WILDERNESS PERMITS

Free wilderness permits are required year-round for all overnight trips into Yosemite’s wilderness. They are not required for day hikes. Yosemite uses a trailhead quota system which limits the number of people who may begin



Swinging Bridge in Wawona Photo by Christine White-Loberg

overnight hikes from each trailhead, each day. This system is designed to avoid overcrowding and to reduce impacts to wilderness areas. At least 40% of each trailhead quota is available on a first-come, first-served basis the day of, or one day prior to, the beginning of your trip. Permit stations are located in Yosemite Valley at the Wilderness Center, Wawona, Big Oak Flat, Hetch Hetchy, and Tuolumne Meadows. Call 209/372-0200 or go to the wilderness web site for open permit station locations and hours. Permits are also available by advance reservation.

PROTECT WATER QUALITY, WILDLIFE, AND FRAGILE TERRAIN

- Pack out all trash and use gas stoves rather than wood fires.
- Store all food, garbage, and toiletries properly (see page 3).
- Camp in an existing, well-used campsite at least 100 feet from water.
- Bring a container to carry water to your camp from lakes or streams.
- Purify all drinking water—boil for 5 minutes, or use a Giardia-rated filter or an iodine-based purifier (see page 7).
- Dispose of human waste in a small hole at least 100 feet from water and trail. Pack out all toilet paper and personal hygiene products.
- Do all washing at least 100 feet from any water source or trail.

For wilderness information, call 209/372-0200 or go to www.nps.gov/yose/wilderness

Watch Your Step!

In 1999, rangers in Yosemite worked on 158 search and rescue operations. Nine people died in the park due to accidents.

Tripping and falling are common accidents on park walkways and trails, especially in slippery conditions.



At night, artificial lighting is kept to a minimum; always carry a flashlight.



Rock climbing and scrambling are the leading causes of injury and death for unprepared and inexperienced hikers. Routes are often more difficult than they appear, and even a short fall can cause serious injury or death. Before you scramble or climb on Yosemite’s rocks or walls, provide yourself with proper equipment and training.



Swift currents and wet, slippery rocks can cause you to fall and be swept over a waterfall. Never swim or wade in streams above waterfalls or in swiftly moving water.



Any unbridged stream crossing may be hazardous. If a bridge is not nearby and you must cross, do so at a wide, shallow spot that is not above rapids or waterfalls.



Supervise children closely when around all bodies of water.

WILDERNESS PERMIT RESERVATIONS

Wilderness users who plan to enjoy Yosemite’s beautiful high country during the peak season (May through September) are encouraged to make permit reservations. Call 209/372-0200 for the latest information. Currently, reservations are available from 24 weeks to 2 days in advance of the trip start date, and can be made by writing to Wilderness Permits, P.O. Box 545, Yosemite, CA 95389, or by calling 209/372-0740.

Include the following in your request: name, address, daytime phone, number of people in the party, method of travel (i.e., ski, snowshoe, foot, horse), number of stock (if applicable), start and end dates, entry and exit trailheads, and principal destination. Include alternate dates and/or trailheads.

A \$5 per person non-refundable processing fee is charged for all reservation requests. Payment by check or money order should be made to the Yosemite Association. Credit card payments are accepted with valid card number and expiration date. Reservation phone lines are often busy. We encourage you to make your request in writing. Mailed requests are processed simultaneously with phone requests.

YOSEMITE VALLEY DAY HIKES

DESTINATION / TRAIL	STARTING POINT	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY/ ELEVATION GAIN	APPROXIMATE HIKING TIME	NOTES
BRIDALVEIL FALL	Bridalveil Fall Parking Area	1/2 mile round trip (0.8 km)	Easy	20 minutes round trip	with assistance
MIRROR LAKE	Mirror Lake Shuttle Stop #16	1 mile to lake (1.6 km)	Easy	1/2 hour to lake	Vehicle access available with placard
LOWER YOSEMITE FALL	Yosemite Falls Shuttle Stop #4	1/2 mile round trip (0.8 km)	Easy	20 minutes round trip	with assistance
UPPER YOSEMITE FALL TRAIL COLUMBIA ROCK	Camp 4 Shuttle Stop #5	2 miles round trip (3.2 km)	Strenuous 1,000' (300 m) elevation gain	2 to 3 hours round trip	Check conditions at Visitor Center in winter
TOP OF YOSEMITE FALL	Same as above	7.2 miles round trip (11.6 km)	Very Strenuous 2,700' (810 m) elevation gain	6 to 8 hours round trip	Check conditions at Visitor Center in winter
MIST TRAIL OR JOHN MUIR TRAIL					
VERNAL FALL FOOTBRIDGE	Happy Isles Shuttle Stop #15	1.4 miles round trip (2.0 km)	Moderate 400' (120 m) elevation gain	1 to 2 hours round trip	Check conditions at Visitor Center Winter route available
TOP OF VERNAL FALL	Same as above	3 miles round trip (4.8 km)	Strenuous 1,000' (300 m) elevation gain	2 to 4 hours round trip	Check conditions at Visitor Center Winter route available
TOP OF NEVADA FALL	Same as above	7 miles round trip (11.3 km)	Strenuous 1,900' (570 m) elevation gain	6 to 8 hours round trip	Check conditions at Visitor Center Winter route available
TOP OF HALF DOME	Same as above	17 miles round trip (27.4 km)	Extremely Strenuous 4,800' (1,463 m) elevation gain	10 to 12 hours round trip	Cables up from June to mid-October; otherwise cable route is closed
GLACIER POINT FOUR MILE TRAIL	Southside Drive	4.8 miles one way (7.6 km)	Very strenuous 3,200' (960 m) elevation gain	3 to 4 hours one way	Check conditions at Visitor Center Closed in winter
VALLEY FLOOR LOOP	Yosemite Falls Shuttle Stop #4	13 miles full loop (20.8 km) 6.5 miles half loop (10.4 km)	Moderate	5 to 7 hours full loop 2.5 to 3.5 hours half loop	Get full description from Visitor Center